

Date:--May 4, 1983

Place:--Foster-Jourdan Center

Interview with: Allie Jones

Interviewed by: G. Maddox

Observations: Mrs. Jones was a quite but friendly person. She is 83 years old and has lived in Evanston most of her life. It might be fruitful to talk to her again.

Q. When did you come to Evanston?

A. My family came in 1907. We lived on Prarie Ave. All the coloreds, I don't say black, lived on the east side of the street and all the whites lived on the west side.

Q. Where did you go to school?

A. I went to the school on Central Street from 1907 to 1914. I took a year off and then went to Evanston Township High school for four years.

Q. Did you go to school with whites?

A. Yes. There were only four coloreds that graduated with me.

Q. Did you get along with the whites in school?

A. We had some fights. We used to throw rocks at the people from Noyes and they used to throw them at us. But Mostly we got along fine.

Q. What did you do after you graduated? Did you go to work?

A. I couldn't get much work because I'm too dark; They light people then.

Q. Were these white businesses?

A. White and balck.

Q. Where were the black Businesses?

A. There were some colored businesses on Central St. and in Wilmette. There some also on Davis, Orrington, all of downtown.

Q. Could you go any place you wanted?

A. We had to enter most places from the rear. We could go to the theatre but we had to enter in the rear. I went to a business college after finishing grammer school, and I had to come in in the rear there. It was downtown, where the Marshall Field's is now.

Q. Were your teachers fair?

A. Most of the teachers were fair. Mr Breadly was one of the best principles ever until they made him quit.

Q. What kind of businesses did blacks own?

A. They owned livries and some resturants on Davis st. Mr. Twiggs was a printer. His daughter, Kay McDonald sang with Duke Ellington for a while.

Q. Were there dance halls or nightclubs in Evanston?

A. There weren't any bars in Evanston. But there were dance halls on Davis and Winter's Hall on Asbury.

Q. Who played there?

A. The James Hot (Hat?) Band played there, and Nat King Cole and a lot of bands from Chicago.

Q. Did whites come to these dances.

A. Mostly blacks.

Q. But in general things were fairly open for blacks?

A. Things were alright. We could ride the bus and sit anywhere we wanted. We didn't have to move to the back like they did in the south. Things were alright. We had some famous people from Evanston.

Q. Like who?

A. Well there was Ald. Jourdan and Eugene Betts (Beck) a little later. Bobby Crowder was a saxaphone player for Father Earl Hines. And the first pilot to fly the Atlantic during World

War II was from Evanston, Freddie Hutchinson. The first casualty from Evanston in World War II was black.







- Q. Were there a lot of blacks who fought in the army?
- A. There were a lot in World War II, and also in World I. They formed an American Legion Post after the war. I worked for the U.S.O. for the soldiers around here.
- Q. Did whites and blacks use the same U.S.O. or were they segregated?
- A. They were mostly segregated. We didn't turn anybody away
- Q. Let's get back to your family. Where did your parents come from?
- A. I came with my parents from Abbeville, South Carolina in March 1907. The train didn't run up here then so we had to walk from Chicago.
- Q. What did your father do?
- A. He was a hod carrier and a Pullman porter.
- Q. Where did he go ?
- A. He went all over. He went to California a lot.
- Q. What kind of activities did you do in school?
- A. I liked to sing. There were singing clubs at school. We used to sing all over. I really liked the May festival at Northwestern. We went to Chicago sometimes.
- Q. Were your teachers white?
- A. Yes but there were black police officers.
- Q. When?
- A. Before 1910, Mr. White and Lavelle. Anna Beck was a police matron right after World War I. But we couldn't go to the hospital.



